PAMELA MACDOUGAL 500 CAMBRIDGE BOULEVARD SE EAST GRAND RAPIDS, MI

Good afternoon, and thank you for listening today.

Here's what happened in East Grand Rapids at lightning speed:

- First, buyers purchased 417 Cambridge for \$157,000.
- Next, the new owners asked the City for set-back and height variances to build a new residence that was not permitted under East Grand Rapids zoning law. A variance notice contemplating demonition went out.

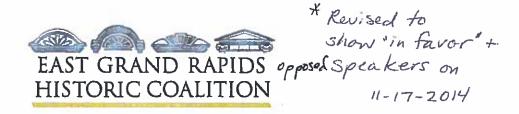
 The City Commission voted down the variances in a 7-0 vote.
- The new owners decided to sell the property instead of redesign.
- They sold the house for \$185,000, which was \$28,000 more than they paid in the auction.
- Today, 417 Cambridge has been fully renovated and the floors are level.

417 is the oldest house on a block of nice big old houses built between 1918 and 1930. Recent house sales on the block have ranged between \$675,000 and \$900,000 for the renovated old houses. There have been no tears downs. Virtually everyone in our neighborhood bought their homes because of the historic character of the street.

- The variance notice was a total surprise ...
- We didn't know much about Michigan property law, but we learned that the city couldn't prevent a tear down under regular zoning law.
- We learned that the only way to get a temporary hold on a demolition was to ask for a historic study.
- The whole neighborhood turned out for the variance hearing. meeting, I asked for a historic study for a four block by four block area... and the City Commission voted my request down.
- Many still wanted demolition protection for our street and would have at least considered a historic district.
- At this point, we had become aware that people living south of Lake Drive within that original proposed area did not want a historic district, so we cut the proposed area down to just our neighborhood.



- A petition showed that the support was *very strong* within the smaller proposed area (67%) of the total number of properties.
- So, at the next public meeting, Joe Becherer (head curator at Meijer Gardens and my neighbor) asked for a study of the smaller area. Instead, the Commission voted to do a "pre-study" to determine whether it should conduct a historic study.
- The pre-study committee: 3 commissioners, 4 residents, 2 from inside the the proposed area, 2 from outside. They engaged in an extensive learning process with city officials from around the state. The pre-study committee found numerous historic district benefits, including to property value in already affluent areas, and they found that many moderate historic districts do exist in Michigan.
- So, the pre-study committee recommended 5-2 that a non-binding historic study be done using volunteers. The 2 "no" votes were City Commissioner Brian Miller, who represents the area south of Lake Drive, and a resident of that same area.
- The Commission held a public meeting. Most of the speakers in favor of the study lived in the proposed area. Owners of only 3 properties in the proposed area spoke against the study. Among speakers from the proposed area 77% were in support.
- The Commission voted not to do a historic study. At all times, the City Commission controlled whether a study would happen, what the proposed area would be, whether a historic district would be designated, what an ordinance would say, and what the boundaries of a district would be. They elected not to study the issue.



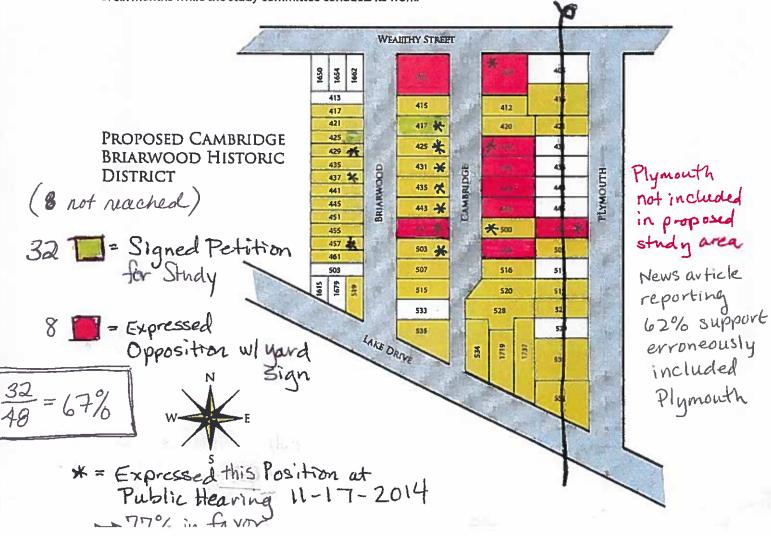
PETITION TO CONDUCT A HISTORIC STUDY

EGR Residents Outside Proposed Historic District

We the undersigned request under Public Act 169 of 1970, "the Local Historic Districts Act", that the City of East Grand Rapids appoint a historic district study committee for the purpose of conducting basic research relating to the creation of a historic district – "The Cambridge/ Briarwood Historic District Study Area – bounded by Wealthy on the north, Cambridge on the east, Lake Drive on the south, and Briarwood on the west.

The study would include conducting a photographic inventory of resources within the proposed historic district, conducting basic research of the proposed historic district, determining the total number of historic and non-historic resources within the proposed historic district, holding public hearings about the findings, collecting comments as required, and preparing a preliminary historic district study report to address the items set forth in the Act. Ultimately, a historic district is created by vote of the City Commission.

We further request that the City of East Grand Rapids by resolution declare an emergency moratorium to prevent demolition of structures within the proposed historic district for a period of six months while the study committee conducts its work.



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